

Peters (J. C.)

ON SECTS IN MEDICINE.

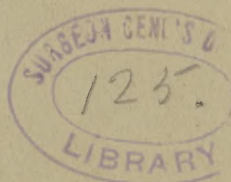
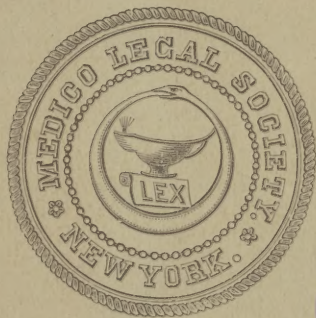
Dupl

BY

B. 125

JOHN C. PETERS M.D.,

President of Medical Library and Journal Association; First Vice-President of the Medico-Legal Society; First Vice-President of the Neurological Society; Member of American Medical Association, of the Academy of Medicine, of the Pathological Society, Etc., Etc.



NEW YORK:

J. R. McDIVITT, LAW PUBLISHER,

No. 111 NASSAU STREET.

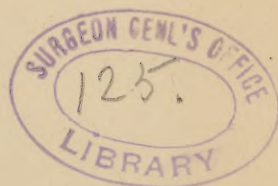
1874.

ON SECTS IN MEDICINE.

BY

JOHN C. PETERS, M.D.,

President of Medical Library and Journal Association; First Vice-President of the Medico-Legal Society; First Vice-President of the Neurological Society; Member of American Medical Association, of the Academy of Medicine, of the Pathological Society, Etc., Etc.



NEW YORK:

J. R. McDIVITT, LAW PUBLISHER,

No. 111 NASSAU STREET.

1874.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1874, by
J. R. McDIVITT,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

LANGE, LITTLE & Co.,
PRINTERS, ELECTROTYPERS AND STEREOTYPERS,
108 to 114 WOOSTER STREET, N. Y.

ON SECTS IN MEDICINE.

By JOHN C. PETERS, M.D.*

So much has been said about sects in medicine of late that I have been induced to search the teachings of history on this point, and will endeavor to give them divested as far as possible of all prejudices or mere opinions.

The first and most important result of this research seems to be, that, although many sects and systems have arisen and flourished like parasites around and upon medicine proper, yet it has never been sectarian. It has always been inclusive, varied, and catholic enough to embrace within itself all rational systems, and all useful discoveries. The foundations of medicine are so broad that the most brilliant discoveries of its scientific votaries, the humblest additions of the common man, and the successful results of the merest accident naturally take their place in its archives in strict proportion to their truth and usefulness. It resists nothing which is in accord with reason or enlightened experience, and profits even by the teachings of its bitterest enemies.

An impartial consideration of the doctrines, theories, and practices of physicians of all ages and of the present times, will convince us that there is only one true art of healing, which rests on the broadest and most comprehensive laws; but we all know that there have been, and probably always will be,

* Read before the Society, 1870.

ON SECTS IN MEDICINE.

many systems; for they are always very fragmentary and transient, merely marking the spirit of inquiry in some one or more directions, or the degree of knowledge, enthusiasm, or folly which is prevailing among some members of the profession at one particular time. Systems are merely the expression of the hopes, prejudices, or ambitions of either honest or designing, but always more or less bigoted or short-sighted men, who become so infatuated with the discovery of some partial or apparent truth that they deceive themselves and their followers into the belief that no greater truths have ever been discovered before, or ever will be again. Instead of making simple additions to science, system makers think it necessary to endeavor to subvert everything which has preceded them in order to make place for some fledgeling of their own.

The thoughtful student of medical history must soon become convinced that the whole art of medicine never has and never can exist in one exclusive system. Each has always claimed to be the only true one; but it has always been superseded sooner or later by another making the same arrogant pretensions. This process has prevailed from the earliest ages, and doubtless will continue till the end of time; for there are always some minds which never can be fortified against the fascination of ingenious, but wonderfully narrow and contracted theories, by observing the fleeting character and puny proportions of those which have already gone down under the relentless ordeals of time and experience.

Because the human body contains blood, fluids, and humors, some factious physicians became exclusive humoralists; because we have bones, muscles, and other solids, some became solidists, and excluded the fluids from all except a very subordinate place in the human system; because many chemical operations take place in the animal economy, some adopted exclusively chemical notions; and so on *ad infinitum*. But these systems, however important and imposing they may have been, or still seem, are the veriest froth which has ever floated on the surface of any art when compared with the vast sum of all the discoveries which long lines of able anatomists, physiologists, surgeons, chemists, and practical physicians

ON SECTS IN MEDICINE.

have made in every age and century. No systems, either ancient or modern, have ever carried the largest, much less the best part of the profession with them, however much it may have adopted from them. Amid all the changes of systems, and the greatest aberrations of the schools, a continuous stream of solid advancement is broadly manifest in every age. As Hufeland correctly says, the sense of true art has always been preserved in the minds of numerous individuals, and there has ever been a church of genuine physicians, who have been guided by reason and experience, who have ever thought and willed the same things, who have ever understood and always will understand each other through all the changes of ages, customs, and languages. Thus Hippocrates and Galen are regarded as marking the two greatest epochs in the early history of medicine. But Hippocrates (B. C. 460) was merely the scion of a family which had followed the pursuit of medicine for fully 300 years, and had preserved many manuscripts and produced numerous celebrated physicians. Much that is attributed to him is but the accumulated knowledge of his predecessors, which fell into his hands by right of descent, and gave him facilities which could not be obtained by others till after parchment and papyrus came into free use in Europe. Although Hippocrates was the contemporary of Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Pericles, Herodotus, Thucydides, Pindar, Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, and Aristides, and fully their equal in natural ability and acquirements, yet he simply gave expression and embodiment, power of perpetuity and progress to the wisdom, experience, and aspirations of the best part of the profession which had preceded him.

Again, Galen (A. D. 131) is supposed to mark another great era in scientific medicine. But the 250 years preceding him were times of greatest activity in the study and practice which we find in the history of the art. In the very years that he lived there were no less than six one-sided sects of doctors, viz., the *Dogmatics*, who relied upon their pure reason, imagination, or internal consciousness about disease and its treatment; the *pure Empirics*, who rested

upon experiment alone, to the exclusion of all reasoning, and almost of judgment and common sense; the *Methodists*, who treated disease in an extremely arbitrary and so-called methodical manner; the *Pneumatics*, who adopted exclusive vital or ethereal notions; the *Episynthetics* or Eclectics, or so-called Conciliators, who strove to harmonize all the conflicting systems and theories. The regular profession never came under the controlling influence of any of these sects, but pursued a wise and unobtrusive course, fully recognizing the predominating absurdity of all these extreme notions, and the partial value of some of them. Anatomy, physiology, materia medica, therapeutics, hygiene, pathology, and the philosophy of medicine were making gigantic strides, so that Galen's code really possessed no great originality, being made up from the discoveries and doctrines of all his predecessors. Theory, or sect, or system could no more mislead such men as Hippocrates, Aretæus, Baglivi, Sydenham, Haller, or Boerhaave, and many others, than a will-of-the-wisp can seduce a traveler who carries a torch, and well knows the road he is on.

The great glory of the true and rational profession of medicine, which has continued from that time to this, is, that there were no sects in it, and we may also say, there never has been, nor ever will be; there being no occasion for them. There is place in it for every real improvement, but not to the exclusion of all others; there is allowance made for every reasonable difference of opinion, but not for the domineering preponderance of any one; every new and rational, or even plausible remedy, whether vegetable, mineral, or animal, always was and is warmly received. This is evidenced by the recent histories of the introduction of oxygen gas, chloroform, bromide of potash, chloral, carbolic and lactic acids, the phosphates, and scores of others; but there is no room for universal panaceas. Every new and really useful instrument, like the ophthalmoscope, laryngoscope, and many others, is almost immediately adopted, by hosts of scientific, skillful, industrious, generous and honorable men. Every size and form of dose, from the smallest within the range of common sense and sound experience, are not only tolerated but advocated; whilst the largest,

which excessive suffering or real danger to life seem absolutely to call for, are often given with a cautious boldness, which sometimes savors of hesitation and reluctance. While the principles of scientific and rational medicine are well fixed and founded, they are so broad and catholic that no rational remedy or procedure for the cure of disease is excluded; so that it is exceedingly difficult for a generous-minded, reasonably unselfish, honorably ambitious, moderately prudent, and fairly learned and skillful physician to overstep the ethics and traditions of his profession. This can only be done by a bigoted and exceedingly enthusiastic devotion to one real or apparent truth, to the exclusion of myriads of others; or by an open resort to quackery.

At the present time we have the female medical sect; the water-cure or hydropathic sect; the movement-cure, or gymnastic sect; the herbalist, or botanic sect; the mystic, demoniac, clairvoyant, or spiritual sect; and the homœopathic. The counterparts of these have prevailed from time to time, and from the earliest ages.

It may be, perhaps, hazardous to discuss these matters in any assembly, and still more so here, for Plato tells us that it is a great sign of an intemperate and corrupt commonwealth where lawyers and physicians do abound.

The best class of the present *female medical sect* has not essayed to introduce new theories or new remedies into the practice of medicine, but is merely trying to learn and practice the art as they find it among the best modern physicians. But it would not be a whit more absurd if it assumed that women only should practice medicine, and all males should be excluded, than it is for the botanic physicians, or modern herbalists, to rely entirely upon vegetable remedies; or for the hydropathists to use water only in the treatment of disease; or for homœopathists to rely exclusively upon infinitesimal doses, or the law *similia similibus*.

In the earliest ages the obstetric art was in the hands of females; but before the Christian era several works were written by competent physicians for the use of midwives and nurses. Among these we may select that of Moschion, who

ON SECTS IN MEDICINE.

wrote a very concise treatise in 152 short sentences, or so-called chapters, in which he explained the whole mechanism of ordinary labor; the correct management of nursing women and of babes; the most common child-bed diseases, such as puerperal hæmorrhages and metrites, and even displacements of the uterus. He was an accomplished obstetrician, and some of his views are still worthy of attention; for he was a good observer, bound to no sect or theory, while he reasoned and prescribed with much skill and judgment.

In the time of the Emperor Constantine the Great, the Empress Flacilla watched over the hospitals, attended to the proper preparation of the food, to the cleanliness of the persons, beds, and wards of the sick, also visited them daily, and even prescribed for many.

In the celebrated school of Salerno, in the 7th century, females were admitted as students of medicine, and some of them distinguished themselves, not only in their practice, but by their medical writings, among whom we may mention: Constantia, Calenda, Abella, Rebecca, Trotha, and Mercurialis.

In the feudal times, as is well known, it was not uncommon for knights who had fought for their ladies, to commit the care of their wounds to the objects of their worship, who took good care always to be possessed of ointments of great repute, as well as charms and amulets of supposed healing virtue, in addition to their own tenderness and personal attractions. Thus armed with potent balms and stimulants, they always rivaled their aged mothers and ordinary nurses; and at times even the priests and doctors, not only in the assiduity of their attentions, but in their real success.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth, however, all this was changed; for, when sundry poor and probably ugly old women, applied to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons for permission to employ their small talent in ministering to the cure of diseases and wounds by means of certain herbs and simples; in the application whereof they boastfully stated that God himself had given them special knowledge; this was firmly and peremptorily refused, on the grounds,

1st, that it was a fraud and blasphemy to assert that Providence had especially favored old women rather than the learned members of the Royal College; 2d, that their knowledge, whatever it might be, had either been gained by common-place experience, or else was very much clouded by mystery and exaggeration; and hence was either of little or no special importance, and was more or less of a pretension and fraud.

At a later time, female practitioners rose to such celebrity that the physicians of Edward VI. of England were dismissed by order of his Council, which placed him in the hands of a confident woman, who promised to restore him quickly to health; but all his bad symptoms, which had been skillfully held in abeyance, soon returned in a violent degree, and he quickly died.

Cotta, in 1612, issued a warning to sick people against consulting what he impudently called petticoat practitioners, whom he advised to prescribe rules for the correct management of themselves, rather than physic to their friends.

Up to comparatively modern times, cookery books were supplemented with various medical prescriptions, and armed with these and many old family receipts for various diseases many good women diversified their daily occupations by concocting medicines for their servants and dependents; and many a Lady Dorel of Kent and Lady Tailor of Huntingdon thought they knew of numerous precious medicines to heal wounds, cure colics, improve the sight, and relieve sore legs.

The late revival of the study of medicine by females is too well known to require comment here; and it remains to be seen if it will be subjected to the same transitions which has always marked its history in former times. Then the majority of female practitioners were ignorant and pretentious; hence they were necessarily overshadowed by the resistless advance of science.

The *water cure* is supposed to be a modern discovery; but it was used in the very earliest ages in the temples of Esculapius, against various febrile, inflammatory, and surgical diseases,

and was recommended by many of the earliest medical writers, including Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna. Thus, before the 1st century, Cardanus boasted that he could cure all diseases with cold water alone. Antonius Musa cured the Emperor Augustus with cold water, and killed the amiable Marcellus with the same harsh means, in the time of St. Luke. Heliodorus used light surgical dressings, the free application of tepid water, and moist compresses. Cassius used cold water freely, both internally and externally, in fevers. Immediately after the introduction of gunpowder, cold water was used freely to relieve the supposed burn of the wounds. In the middle ages the barber-surgeons and bath-keepers were formidable rivals of scientific physicians and surgeons.

In the 15th century wounds were duly washed with fair clean water, covered with a soft linen rag, and opened once a day to cleanse off purulent and other matter. If they needed stimulating, linseed oil and turpentine were applied; if they required astringents, Armenian bole, fullers' clay, or weak solutions of alum or sulphate of zinc were employed. When this was not satisfactory to the public, quackish men like Paracelsus applied complicated and disgusting salves to the weapon which had caused the wound, but treated the injury itself in the above judicious and simple manner. Dr. Fludd, Sir Kelemm Digby, Valentine Greatrake, and many others descended to the same impostures, but filched the above wise procedures from the profession which they outraged and abused.

In the 18th century, Sir John Floyer and Dr. Baynard, in England, resorted to bathing almost exclusively in chronic diseases, as did Hoffmann and Hahn on the Continent. In 1797, Dr. James Currie published highly favorable reports of the effects of water in many diseases. But the distinctive *water-cure*, or hydropathy of modern times, owes its origin to an ignorant Silesian peasant, Vincent Priessnitz. At various times he sprained his wrist, crushed his thumb, and broke his ribs, in the treatment of which he relied on cold wet compresses. He noticed that when water had been applied for a long time, and the skin become thoroughly macerated, that

pimples, boils, and rashes were apt to come out, and was thus led to frame for himself a crude humoral pathology for all diseases, and a theory of the elimination of all morbid matters through the skin ; or by flushing the liver, stomach, bowels and kidneys with enormous quantities of water. He tried to prevent further morbid accumulations by a severely regulated dietary regimen. His water treatment was unquestionably too incessant and severe, and some of his patients succumbed to this, to excessive exercise, and to food that was too plain and too light, aided by insufficient bed and body clothing ; while others only escaped with their lives from a peculiar vital tenacity which many apparently delicate persons often exhibit, especially when buoyed up by the enthusiasm which is excited by boundless promises, and equally boundless abuse of all other medical practice. The exclusive use of water in disease must be regarded in the same light as that of any patent pill, syrup, or mixture. The hypochondriac, the valetudinarian, the hysterical, and the self-indulgent may receive some benefit, which however is generally temporary ; self-limited diseases will of course recover, though in a less proportion than when under a more varied and scientific treatment ; and this is about all that can be said of it, although Captain Claridges and Bulwers, in their "Confessions of a Water-patient," will always do much to render it popular.

The originator of the *movement cure* was Herodicus of Thrace, who is stated by Hippocrates to have killed some of his patients with sub-acute internal inflammations by the severity of his exercises, and to have brought on ruptures, rheumatisms, pleurisies, lumbago, and numerous myalgic sufferings in others.

The advantages of properly regulated exercise are so fully admitted that we need only say that the attempt to form an exclusive sect for the treatment of all diseases, including cancer, consumption, etc., by the movement cure, is only a trifle more absurd than to treat them with water alone. Physicians cheerfully admit the occasional advantages of these methods, and have picked out some useful hints from the excessive, exclusive, and often dangerous procedures of their advocates.

ON SECTS IN MEDICINE.

As regards the *Botanic sect*, all primitive medicine is almost necessarily herbal or botanic, as it still is among rude nations like the Indians and Tartars. Civilization must have made considerable advances before mineral and chemical preparations can be applied to the cure of disease. It is easy for the common man to pick up a plant and make some random trials with it; and it is equally easy for him to exaggerate all its virtues; but to obtain mineral remedies metallurgy must be understood, and some progress must have been made in chemistry.

Vegetable remedies have never been neglected in the regular profession; for it has always been admitted that the indigenous remedies of every country are well worthy of attention.

Pamphilus, in the reign of Ptolemy Philometer, was the author of a treatise on medicinal herbs, which he described in alphabetical order, and admits that he had collated largely from the Egyptian Hermes or Thot.

The elder Heras and Attalus the 2d were actively engaged in the cultivation and administration of medicinal herbs. Plutarch tells us that their botanical gardens were filled with hyosciamus, hellebore, conium, aconite, colocynth, colchicum, and many other active plants; which were collected at proper seasons, their juices expressed, and fluid extracts made, or tinctures prepared with wine; while the roots, leaves, and seeds were dried and preserved for future use. Hippocrates (450 B. C.) used 300 vegetable, 150 animal, and only 36 mineral substances in his practice. Dioscorides, in the reigns of Claudius and Nero, recommended 700 vegetable and 168 animal substances. Melampus noticed that goats were purged with hellebore, and 200 years before the Trojan war, and long before the Christian era, advised it in melancholic and bilious disorders. Antonius Musa, according to Pliny, owed his first success in Rome to the use of lettuce or lactucarium for morbid vigilance and sleeplessness in the Emperor Augustus. Galen, in the decline of life, used the same remedy for the sleeplessness of old age, and correctly informs us that the young and tender plants are inoperative. Musa also used

the speedwell, or modern leptandra, or so-called Culver's physic, and recommended it in no less than forty-seven different diseases. Apulius Celsus wrote a treatise on medical herbs, which is still extant. Philomenus used assafoetida in colic, nervousness, convulsions, and even in tetanus, in the time of Nero. Archigenes used castor and musk in the reign of Trajan. Antyllus, in the reign of the Emperor Valerian, treated asthma with inhalations or suffumigation of the fumes of aristolochia and clematis, sprinkled over burning coals. Conium was better known in the time of Socrates than ever after, until the time of Baron Stork in the 18th century. The sect of Essenes paid particular attention to vegetable remedies, 150 B. C. Archigenes used opium for pain, diarrhoea and dysentery, in the 1st century. Aretæus of Cappadocia used cantharides for blisters in the 1st century, previous to which the juice of euphorbium or milk-weed had been relied upon. Many virtues were attributed to sambucus, or elder. Alexander of Tralles, Oribasius, and Ætius used colchicum in rheumatism and gout; and Cælius Aurelianus gave it mixed with pepper, ginger, cinnamon, and aniseed, to prevent its prostrating effects; and with scammony to increase its purgative properties. He says the gouty people who took it walked almost immediately. Male fern was used by Galen against tape worm, yet the so-called secret was sold to Louis XV., for a very large sum. The rapid extension of the Grecian army under Alexander the Great was the means of introducing many new vegetable remedies, so that at one time it was said that the smallest sore could not be treated, except by some herb brought from the Red Sea. Pliny the Elder, A. D. 23, wrote five books on the medicinal uses of plants. Ruffius of Ephesus wrote a treatise on the use of vegetable purgatives, including hellebore, colocynth, colchicum, aloes, scammony, gamboge, and others. Priscian was the author of a work on indigenous medicinal plants. In the 3d century, a medical poem was written in seventy-seven sections, each of which was devoted to the therapeutic virtues of some particular plant. Ætius, in the 6th century, wrote a large treatise on medicinal plants. The Arabians introduced manna, cassia,

senna, rhubarb, musk, nutmeg, camphor, and *nux vomica* into practice. Theophrastus, who inherited the manuscripts, etc., of Aristotle, speaks of a vegetable poison which could be moderated in such manner as to kill in two or three months, or as many years. This was prepared from *aconite*, a plant which people were forbidden in those early times to have in their possession, on pain of death.

In the 11th century, a book on therapeutics was written, in six volumes, in which it is stated that the principal difficulty of the author was the multiplicity of the vegetable remedies, both indigenous, Saracenic and Greek, which were in common use; especially as the early herbalists, like the modern, ascribed almost incredible virtues to every herb of the field.

Before the invention of printing, manuscript books, written on papyrus or parchment, were necessarily in the hands of the few; but, from the year 1554 to 1561, no less than 32,000 copies of Dioscorides' great work on the *Materia Medica* were printed and sold.

Caius Plinius, under Vespasian, wrote fifteen books on botanic *Materia Medica*, and, unlike the modern botanic physicians, was opposed to complicated prescriptions, but like them preferred indigenous to foreign remedies. Herophilus of Alexandria, long before the Christian era, said that the plants which we are constantly treading under our feet are possessed of many distinctive and powerful properties, which can be made either dangerous or useful according to the skill and intelligence with which we employ them. Angitia of Colehis used many herbs, especially in angina or sore throat, which derives its name from her. An Arabian physician, Ebu Barthai, wrote a great book in which he describes no less than 1400 medicinal plants. Matthiolus, in A. D. 1501, left several works, principally relating to the medicinal virtues of plants, and wrote a commentary on the great work of Dioscorides, illustrated with many plates.

The discovery of America in 1492 was followed by the addition of a long list of new vegetable remedies, and the well-known dangerous fault of attributing too many and too great

virtues to one and the same plant was fallen into, especially as regards sarsaparilla, sassafras, guaiac, and even ipecac and Peruvian bark.

From 1760 to 1771, Baron Storck, President of the faculty of Medicine at Vienna, and physician to the Empress Maria Theresa, distinguished himself by a long and assiduous course of experiments upon the sick and healthy with various narcotic vegetables, such as aconite, pulsatilla, conium, hyosciamus, stramonium, colchicum, and others; and certainly has the merit of fixing the attention of practitioners on these active and useful plants from that time to the present.

Thus it will be seen that almost every remedy relied upon by the homœopathic and botanic sects has been known from the earliest ages, and equally good and even much better ones have been in constant use before and since the commencement of the Christian era.

If the true profession can learn something from the somewhat practical water, movement, and botanic sects it has always been utterly at variance with the *supernatural* or *clairvoyant*, and with the so-called *spiritual* or *demoniac* sects. The regular profession has been in a constant struggle and opposition to these from the earliest ages.

The Egyptian priests who were charged with the preservation of the votive tablets which contained the earliest records of medical practice, in the temples, seized upon them, and attempted to control exclusively the treatment of the sick, under the pretense that disease and pestilence were always the result of the anger of the gods and demons; and that it belonged to their functions to make propitiation. But, even in the very precincts of the temples there were always true physicians, who maintained that no disorder was more the result of divine or demoniac wrath than another; that they all originated from natural causes, and from infringements of the laws of nature, and principally from the neglect of personal and public hygiene; from improper diet, clothing, uncleanness of persons, houses, streets, cities; or from improper drainage of lands and places; also very frequently from excess of food and drink, and deficient exercise. These true physicians likewise

maintained that therapeutics was not the invention of special spirits, demons, or gods, but was the natural result of the slow, careful and difficult experience of skilled and thoughtful mortals. They declared that it was useless to sleep in the temples merely to dream dreams and consult oracles, but it was wise to depend upon the observations and reflections recorded on the votive tablets, and gained in the actual management of disease. They believed and taught that medicines were not given to appease the anger of irritable or malignant spirits, (demons), or so-called gods, but had been scattered broadcast over the earth by the Creator to remove the inevitable consequences of man's misfortunes, ignorance, and folly; and that it only required the industrious and intelligent exertion of man's powers of body and mind to discover their uses. In the very earliest ages, and in the very precincts of the temples, these "real doctors" believed and taught that true "professional piety" consisted not in the sacrificing of hecatombs of bulls, nor in burning piles of incense and fragrant herbs, but in ascertaining for oneself and in teaching others the mistakes of sick mortals, the true laws of health and hygiene, and something of the goodness, power and wisdom of the Creator, who had abundantly supplied every living creature with what was best and most convenient for its use, and who sustained all by his bounty. They taught that the problems of the true physician are very simple, yet very difficult. He meets with distress, pain, and disease everywhere, and the remedies are spread broadcast over the world, within the reach of every hand, and trodden under every foot. But how to apply them? Simply with an humble, intelligent, observant and honest spirit. The whole practice of medicine originally rested entirely upon pure observation, and the records on the votive tablets were open to all. There was no mystery, no concealment, no unwarranted pretensions, no exaggeration, and very soon a prodigious quantity of facts were accumulated, and some correct principles were quickly advanced. The greatest difficulty was to contend with the credulity and superstitions of the age, which after all were not greater perhaps than they now are. It is to the credit of real physicians that few or no

ON SECTS IN MEDICINE.

supernatural cures have ever been attributed to those who applied themselves honestly and industriously to the study and cure of disease. They have always remained steadfast against the illusions of magic, witchcraft, astrology, mesmerism, etc., and a broad and continuous stream of progressive and scientific medicine can easily be traced amidst the prevalence of the greatest charlatanry, bigotry, superstition, and credulity in the populace. They remained firm when Pythagoreans, Cabalists, Gnostics, and Essenes all dipped in the mysterious and lucrative practices of superstitious exorcisms, amulets, charms, etc.

They had to contend with the Emperor Vespasian, who pretended to cure blindness with his spittle, paralysis and enlargement of the liver and spleen by the touch of his royal toe. Against Appolonius, who claimed to raise the dead. Against the devotion to magic by the Emperors Titus, Aurelius, and Severus. Against those like Marinus, who by long fasting and constant prayer thought they had received the power of expelling all diseases. Against all Europe, which once descended to the absurdity of Egyptian and Persian idolatry, in the reverence paid to amulets, talismans, charms, and an unreasoning belief in relics, in the delusions of astrology, and the credulity and imposture of the royal touch. Against the apparently miraculous effects of absurd ceremonies; for in times of pestilence a dictator was elected for the sole purpose of driving a nail into the wall of the temple of Jupiter, and the effect was palpable and instantaneous, for while the populace imagined that they had propitiated an offended demon, or so-called god, their faith diminished their susceptibility to disease by appeasing their own fears. It required a long course of discipline, gained by the frequent recurrence of pestilential diseases, to eradicate this and other absurd procedures, for even the great Pericles wore amulets about his neck; and Aristides the Just placed confidence in soothsayers. He was the dupe and victim of knavish men for ten successive years; he was alternately purged, vomited, and blistered; made to walk barefoot under a burning sun in summer, and in winter he was directed to bathe his emaciated body in an

icy river ; finally, he was ordered to lose 120 pounds of blood, and this opened his eyes. This reminds us of some of the pranks of modern spirits. Cato the Censor relied on the divining rod and incantations to reduce dislocations of the hip, and advised cabbage in all diseases. Even Popes Benedict 9th, John 20th, and the 6th and 7th Gregories openly avowed their belief in sorcery. Also King Pyrrhus, the Emperors Hadrian and Vespasian, and Mahomet believed in the royal touch. In the 11th century (A. D. 1026), Edward the Confessor revived this practice, and was followed by Philip the 1st of France and St. Louis ; whilst James 1st even essayed to cure the hopelessly blind. Charles the 2d touched 92,107 cases in twenty-one years, or nearly 4,400 per year, and was followed by Henry 7th, the queens Elizabeth and Anne, and by George the 1st. These illustrious persons, commencing with enthusiasm, credulity and superstition, finally descended to the imposture of forcing their serjeant surgeons to select those cases only which presented signs of recovery ; but soon these men, led by Drs. Becket and Wiseman rebelled against this degradation of their art ; still it required several generations to teach the monarchs of England, by the adverse influence of numberless failures, how to emancipate themselves from the degrading duty of maintaining the fanatical ceremony of the royal touch. Finally, even the glamour of majesty itself could no longer inspire amazement enough, and the custom was abandoned when true physicians had rendered it ridiculous in the eyes of all men. At one time European physicians had to contend with 7,000 interpreters of dreams. Even the learned and pious Erasmus once attributed his recovery from a dangerous illness to the intercession of St. Geneveva, to whom he addressed an ode ; although he was regularly attended by William Cope, the most skillful physician in Paris. At another time he abandoned the Saint and Dr. Cope, and relied upon the quack Paracelsus, who nearly killed him. Wesley attributed his cure to a brown paper plaster of egg and sulphur, and not at all to Fothergill's prescription of four months' repose from his labors, living in the country, milk diet, and horse exercise. Sir Christopher Wren

dreamed of dates, ate them freely, and supposed that they cured him of pain and disorder in his kidneys. Bishop Hall, one of the most learned and amiable men of his time, said that "old wives and the stars were his counselors; charms were his physicians, and a little hallowed wax an antidote to every ill." Lord Bacon thought that three grains of nitre taken every morning would prolong life beyond its natural period, but died at sixty-six, although he had persisted in this practice for thirty years.

Practical physicians had to contend with credulous astrologers and laymen of education, who parceled out the face of the heavens into twelve divisions or houses with as much precision as if they were laying out a Dutch garden; and apportioned the principal planet in each division as the lord of the house. It seemed of no consequence that some projected their lines in one direction, and others in another, so that the houses became mixed, and the lines crossed each other in a complex and arbitrary way as in a kaleidoscope or Chinese puzzle. Mars and Saturn in conjunction were gravely stated to cause pestilential disease. Lead colic was attributed to a new star which had made its appearance in the constellation Cassiopeia; and Astrology was the vulgar oracle which was often consulted before a dose of medicine was given. Syphilis was supposed to have arisen from a peculiar conjunction of Mars and Venus. Eruptions of Mount Vesuvius, earthquakes, famine, the overflowing of the Tiber, the invasion of the Goths, the plague which broke out in Egypt and was conveyed to Constantinople, and from thence to Italy, all were attributed to the presence of comets, and a peculiar arrangement of the stars.

But by far the most formidable antagonist of the profession was Paracelsus in the 15th century, and his influence is still powerful at the present time, for he was the founder both of the mesmeric and homœopathic sects. His claim to be the first of the magnetizers can scarcely be questioned, and from his time there was a regular succession of mineral magnetizers until Mesmer appeared and gave a new feature to the delusion. Paracelsus assumed that the magnet was the philoso-

pher's stone, which could transmute metals, soothe all human suffering, and arrest the progress of decay. He also used a stone or crystal which he called *azoth*, said to contain magnetic properties, and to cure epilepsy, hysteria, and convulsive affections. He originated the weapon salve, which Parson Foster says the devil himself gave to Paracelsus, he to Baptista Porta, he to Dr. Fludd, he to Sir Kelemm Digby. Valentine Greatrake was next in order of the magnetizers; then Father Hell, a professor of astronomy, in 1771 and 1772; and finally Mesmer in 1774, who became the founder of animal magnetism and modern spiritualism. He opened most sumptuous apartments in Paris, and had the impertinence to apply to Marie Antoinette for 500,000 francs in order to continue his experiments at leisure, and wished a commission appointed by the Academy of Sciences to examine into the merits of his system. The principal physicians of Paris, with Benjamin Franklin, Lavoisier the chemist, and Bailly, the historian of astronomy, were upon this commission. Mesmer only died in 1815, aged 81.

He was followed by the Marquis of Puysegur, who magnetized an elm tree; and by the Chevalier Barbarin, whose fanatical followers increased rapidly in Germany and Sweden.

In 1788, Dr. Marmaduc, in England, deceived 127 gentlemen, ladies, surgeons, physicians, clergymen, members of Parliament, bishops, barons, baronesses, earls, dukes and duchesses. Hannah More had sense enough to denounce them as demoniacal mummeries.

Holloway and Louthenburg sometimes had 3,000 persons crowded about their houses, waiting to gain entrance, at three guineas a ticket.

In 1798 Perkins and his tractors came in vogue.

Drs. Haygarth and Falconer exposed him with wooden tractors, and published a small volume "On the Imagination as a Cause and Cure of Disorders, exemplified by Fictitious Tractors."

But Perkins was followed by the well-known Deleuze in 1813, who advised his followers to forget for a while all their

knowledge of physics; reject from their minds all objections which might occur; and not to attempt to reason for at least six weeks.

Paracelsus also originated or revived the homœopathic doctrine in the 15th century—he says the law *contraria contrariis curantur* is false, and never did hold true in medicine—that a hot disease had never been cured by cold remedies, nor cold diseases by hot remedies. But it is well done, says he, when we oppose like to like. Know all men that like attacks its like, but never its contrary.

He was too shrewd a quack and impostor to confine himself to the law *similia similibus*—he used lead and other cooling and astringent remedies in fever; adopted tartar emetic from Basil Valentine, who had discovered it over 100 years previously; carried the use of opium, which had been in vogue from the 1st century onwards, to greater lengths than it had ever been employed before; and used mercury in the most reckless manner, as it had just been noticed that workers in quicksilver recovered from syphilis without other medication.

Hahnemann came under the influence of Mesmer in Vienna, in 1777, and probably got his notions about potentizing and magnetizing his remedies by rubbings and triturations from him. The Tartar physicians, or Llama doctors, have long superseded infinitesimal doses, as, if they do not happen to have any medicine with them, they are by no means disconcerted; for they merely write the name of the remedy they wish to give on a little scrap of paper, moisten this with the saliva, roll it up into a pill, which the patient tosses down with the same perfect confidence as he would aloes, assafoetida, or any other remedy. To swallow the name of a remedy, or to take the medicine itself, say the Tartar physicians and patients, comes to precisely the same thing. If paper is not at hand, the name of the drug is written with clay or chalk upon a board, which is then washed off, and the patient swallows the liquid.

How different from all these mummeries were the first great rules of the medical profession. It was at first merely

assumed that remedies which have cured a given disease must be equally efficacious in identical cases, and may be very useful in similar diseases. Thus far the best physicians of ancient times had speculated very little on morbid phenomena, or the effects of remedies. They contented themselves with observing which medicines benefited or cured certain diseases, and then employed them in similar cases.

The second therapeutic law was : There must be an essential, even if not evident, antagonism between the whole or part of the actions of the remedy and the disease ; and that the curative virtues of the remedy must be in opposition, real or direct, with the cause or principle of the disease.

The third therapeutic law was : The remedy must *differ* in some essential manner from the action of the disease, and that all correct medical treatment is *alterative*. At first an unlimited extension was given to the word *contrary*, so as to include not only those things which are endowed with opposite elementary qualities, as heat and cold, dry and moist ; but also all things which differ among themselves in any way. But it was proven that this was merely and illogically to make it a synonym of the word *different*. Next it was easily seen that as antagonism is merely the greatest degree of difference, all other and lesser degrees must also be operative in their spheres ; and although the best cures might take place where the antagonism was absolute and complete, yet that very good results might follow when the antagonism was only partial and incomplete. Next it was noticed that some substances which closely resemble each other in their action, like the caustic alkalies and acids, often contain a radical difference or antagonism ; and finally it was admitted that all resemblance includes some difference. Renouard says, in his "History of Medicine," p. 107, that from the very commencement the law *contraria contrariis curantur* was not universally adopted. Thus, in the book entitled "Ancient Medicine," written before the time of Hippocrates, and which is one of the most philosophic of the Hippocratic collection, several paragraphs are devoted to the refutation of exclusive reliance on this dogma. We there read : Diseases are some-

times cured by contraries and sometimes by remedies which are different, be the difference great or slight.

This is an important point, for at a later period Galen again assumed that diseases were only cured by their contraries, and Paracelsus and Hahnemann that they can only be cured by their similars, and thus founded one-sided and exclusive systems.

The honest and ancient physician was truly thankful for his frame, his brain, and his senses; thankful for every faculty of his mind and body; thankful for every vegetable, animal, or mineral medicine; thankful that the Creator had implanted in so many substances reliable medicinal virtues, which could be more or less easily ascertained; thankful that he knew how to use them in simplicity and honesty, without a weak and meretricious reliance upon charms, mysterious ceremonies, incantations, and mummeries; thankful that they could be made to yield up their virtues, in simple decoctions or infusions, or could be preserved in wine, oil, or honey.

At this early age many physicians would be bound to no absolute and unchangeable code, but merely pledged themselves to act according to the best of their ability and judgment—to abstain from whatever was manifestly deleterious, mischievous, or corrupt; to give no deadly medicine, nor allow it to be given; to produce no abortion, perform no castration, or useless mutilation; effect or countenance no seduction; divulge no secrets of his patients; but pass his life in the diligent and faithful practice of his art in purity and charity to all.

True medical history is not the mere record of squabbles between opposing sects, nor of varying and conflicting modes of practice; although doctors, like other mortals, often disagree; but is the record of almost continuous progress. A persistent stream of scientific medicine can be traced midst the prevalence of the greatest charlatanry and bigotry; and there has never been a complete solution of the continuity of medical truth and science.

Long before the time of Hippocrates the statues of the Esculapian god were represented as a bearded and aged

man, indicative of experience and wisdom ; sometimes bare-headed, sometimes crowned, as representative of the storms and trials through which he had passed, or the victories which he had gained ; sometimes erect, as the good physician requires no support but an approving conscience and the blessing of God ; sometimes leaning on his staff, around which a serpent is seen winding in spiral folds, as emblematic of the dreadful and poisonous influences which he could control for the benefit of mankind ; sometimes the staff was knotted, to indicate the difficulties of practice, and the hard blows which he often had to inflict upon refractory patients and obstinate diseases ; sometimes he is alone, as if the medical art was all sufficient, but more frequently attended by Hygeia, robed in white, as indicative of the purity, simplicity, orderliness, and cleanliness of hygienic rules. Not unfrequently a noble child was placed between Esculapius and Hygeia, as representative of that innocency, beauty, health, and fruitfulness which Nature and Hygeia can alone bestow. Sometimes the genius of medicine was represented sitting, pensive, alone, with its fingers pressed upon its lips, as if admonishing its votaries to solitary study, deep thought, and cautious utterance ; sometimes a faithful dog lay at its feet, or a gallant cock was at its elbow. Arrayed in all these symbolical devices, how grandly was the ancient idea of the true physician portrayed, viz., sage, modest, pure, faithful at night, vigilant in the morn, courageous and discreet at all times, wise, fatherly, kindly, cleanly, and abstemious—the true preventer and curer of disease and pestilence.

PAPERS

READ BEFORE THE

Medico-Legal Society of New York,

From its Organization in 1868, to January, 1873,

TO BE ISSUED IN OCTOBER NEXT IN BOOK FORM, BY

J. R. McDIVITT, 111 Nassau Street, N. Y.

The Law in reference to Suicide and Intemperance in Life Insurance. By William Shrady, LL.B.

The Influence of Methomania upon Business and Criminal Responsibility. By Stephen Rogers, M.D., of New York.

Methomania. By James J. O'Dea, M.D., New York City.

Hereditary Diseases of the Nervous System unattended by Mental Aberration. By Stephen Rogers, M.D., of New York.

Laws Relating to Inebriate Asylums and Habitual Drunkards. By William Shrady, A.M., LL.B.

Mental Unsoundness, as affecting Testamentary Capacity. By Jacob Shrady, LL.B., Counsellor-at-Law.

Analysis of the Evidence in the Stennecke Alleged Poisoning Case.

Medical Points in regard to the Suicide and Intemperance Provisos of Life Insurance Policies. By Dr. S. Teller.

Hereditary Influence in Mental Diseases. By James J. O'Dea, M.D.

The Law in reference to the Sale of Poisons by Druggists. By Francis Tillou, Esq., Counsellor-at-Law.

A Medico-Legal Study of the Case of Daniel McFarland. By William A. Hammond, M.D.

A Medico-Legal Opinion relative to the Sanity of Carlton Gates. By Charles A. Lee, M.D., of Peekskill, N. Y.

Does the Law deal unfairly with Questions of Insanity? By J. V. Campbell.

The Plea of Insanity in Criminal Cases. By James J. O'Dea, M.D., of New York.

On Sects in Medicine. By John C. Peters, M.D.

Can Chloroform be used to Facilitate Robbery? By Stephen Rogers, M.D.

The Medico-Legal value of Confession as an Evidence of Guilt. By William A. Hammond, M.D.

Suggestions Relative to the Sequestration of the Person of Alleged Lunatics. By R. L. Parsons, M.D.

Medico-Legal Considerations upon Alcoholism and the Moral and Criminal Responsibility of Inebriates. By Paluel De Marmon, M.D., of Kingsbridge, N. Y.

The Sphere, Rights and Obligations of Medical Experts. By James J. O'Dea, M.D., of New York.

The Legitimate Influence of Epilepsy upon Criminal Responsibility. By Meredith Clymer, M.D.

Medico-Legal Suggestions on Insanity. By Charles A. Lee, M.D.

Medico-Legal Notes on the Case of Edward H. Ruloff; with Observations upon, and Measurements of, his Cranium, Brain, etc. By George Burr, M.D., Binghamton, N. Y.

The Psychological Status and Criminal Responsibility of the Totally Uneducated Deaf and Dumb. By Isaac Lewis Peet, A.M., Principal of the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb.

Inaugural Address on assuming the Presidency of the New York Medico-Legal Society. By Stephen Rogers, M.D.

Report on Criminal Abortion.

Homicide by Poisoning. By Wooster Beach, M.D.

The Influence of Uræmic and Alcoholic Poisoning on Testamentary Capacity. By Stephen Rogers, M.D.

The Criminal Use of Proprietary or Advertised Nostrums. By Ely Van De Warker, M.D., Syracuse, N. Y., Corresponding Member of the Medico-Legal Society of New York; of the Gynaecological Society of Boston, etc.

Epilepsy and its Relations to Insanity, and Cases of Doubtful Responsibility before Judicial Tribunals, with Remarks on Expert Testimony. By A. O. Kellogg, M.D., Hudson River State Hospital, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Medico-Legal Points in the Case of David Montgomery. By William A. Hammond, M.D., Professor of the Mind and Nervous System, and of Clinical Medicine, in the Bellevue Hospital Medical College, etc.

Inaugural Address of Clark Bell, Esq., as President of the Society.

Juries and Physicians on Questions of Insanity. By R. S. Guernsey, Esq., of the New York Bar.

Juries and Physicians on Questions of Insanity. A Short Commentary on the Paper of R. S. Guernsey, Esq., entitled "Juries and Physicians on Questions of Insanity." By F. A. Burrall, M.D.

The True Object of Medical Legislation. By Stephen Rogers, M.D., of New York City, President of the New York Medico-Legal Society; Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine; Member of the Medical Society of the County of New York; late Professor of Physiology in the New York Medical College, etc., etc.

Appendix.—Constitution and By-Laws of the Medico-Legal Society.